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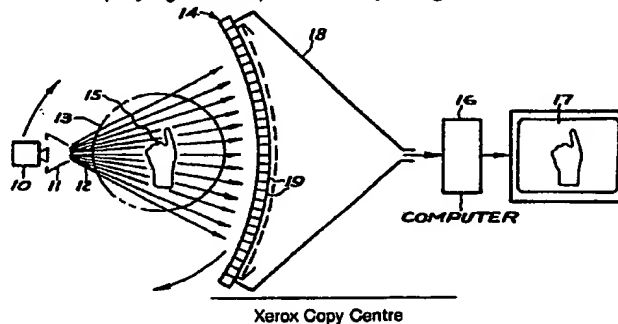
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(54) Solid state scintillator and treatment therefor.

(57) A polycrystalline ceramic scintillator (14) is disclosed for radiographic applications which has received a controlled oxidation anneal to reduce radiation damage otherwise occurring when said scintillator is exposed to X radiation during conversion of said X radiation to the display image. The particular ceramic material treated in said manner comprises a densely sintered rare earth doped gadolinia containing metal oxide having a cubic crystal structure which has been annealed after sintering in a controlled oxygen containing atmosphere. A preferred ceramic composition comprises from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.5 mole percent and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 , and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , and the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 . A treatment to produce said improved x-ray conversion medium is also disclosed along with radiographic imaging systems and methods employing said improved x-ray image conversion medium.



SOLID STATE SCINTILLATOR AND TREATMENT THEREFOR

RELATED PATENT APPLICATION

6 A co-pending EP application, EP 023538, assigned to the same assignee as the present application, discloses a densely sintered polycrystalline gadolinia containing ceramic scintillator with a similar composition to that being modified in accordance with the present invention. Since the present invention represents an improvement thereof, said referenced co-pending application is specifically incorporated herein by reference.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

15 This invention relates generally to improved rare-earth doped ceramic scintillator materials which are especially useful in medical radiographic application as well as other x-ray, gamma radiation, and nuclear radiation detection applications. More specifically, the present invention relates to rare earth doped polycrystalline yttria-gadolinia ($Y_2O_3 - Gd_2O_3$) ceramic scintillators which have been treated during or after sintering to reduce radiation damage otherwise occurring when said scintillator material is exposed to the

20 aforementioned type high energy radiation for the conversion of said radiation to a display image.

Solid state scintillator materials have long been used as radiation detectors to detect penetrating radiation in such applications as x-ray counters and image intensifiers. More recently, such detectors have played an important role in computerized tomography (CT) scanners, digital radiography (DR), and other x-ray, gamma radiation, ultraviolet radiation, and nuclear radiation detecting applications. The scintillator materials emit visible or near visible radiation when stimulated by x-rays or other high energy electromagnetic photons hence are widely incorporated as integral parts of various industrial and medical radiographic equipment. In medical applications, it is especially desirable that the scintillator output be as large as possible to minimize exposure of the medical patient to the x-ray dosage. A known class of scintillator materials considered for use in CT applications is monocrystalline inorganic compounds such as cesium iodide (CsI), bismuth germanate ($Bi_4Ge_3O_{12}$), cadmium tungstate ($CdWO_4$), calcium tungstate ($CaWO_4$) and sodium iodide (NaI). Another known class of solid state scintillator materials comprises polycrystalline inorganic phosphors including europium activated barium fluorochloride ($BaFCl:Eu$), terbium activated lanthanum oxybromide ($LaOBr:Tb$) and thulium activated lanthanum oxybromide ($LaOBr:Tm$). A still third class of already known solid state scintillator materials found useful in computerized tomography comprises

35 various dense sintered polycrystalline ceramics such as rare earth doped yttria-gadolinia (Y_2O_3/Gd_2O_3) and polycrystalline forms of said previously mentioned phosphors including $BaFCl:Eu$, $LaOBr:Tb$, $CsI:Tl$, $CaWO_4$, and $CdWO_4$.

In the aforementioned commonly assigned copending application, there is disclosed a CT scanner employing a solid state scintillator body as the x-ray conversion means. Said prior art polycrystalline ceramic scintillator comprises between about 5 and 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.02 and 12 mole percent of either Eu_2O_3 or Nd_2O_3 as a rare earth activator oxide, between about 0.003 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said scintillator composition being Y_2O_3 . As recognized in connection with the CT scanner equipment further disclosed in said co-pending application, the scintillator material when excited by

45 impinging X radiation emits optical wavelengths energy. In typical medical or industrial applications, the optical output from the scintillator material is made to impinge upon a photoelectrically responsive device which produces electrical output signals. The amplitude of these signals is directly related to the intensity of the impinging X radiation. The electrical signals can be digitized for processing by digital computer means, which means generates the absorption co-efficients in a form suitable for a display on a cathode ray tube

50 screen or other permanent media.

In order to meet the specific and demanding requirements of this type medical radiographic applications, the scintillator material employed must be an efficient converter of X radiation into optical radiation, in those regions of the electromagnetic spectrum which are most efficiently detected by photodetection means such as photomultipliers or photodiodes. It is also desirable that this scintillator transmit optical radiation efficiently, by avoiding optical trapping, so that optical radiation originating deep inside the scintillator body

escapes for detection by the externally situated photodetectors. The scintillator materials should also have high x-ray stopping power, low hysteresis, spectral linearity, and short afterglow or persistence. High x-ray stopping power is desirable for efficient x-ray detection, because x-rays not absorbed by the scintillator escape detection. Hysteresis refers to the scintillator material property whereby the optical output varies for identical x-ray excitation, based on the irradiation history of the scintillator. For CT application, typical detection accuracies are on the order of one part in one thousand, for a number of successive measurements taken at a relatively high rate. Accordingly, low hysteresis is required in order to provide repeated precise measurements of optical output from each scintillator body, and to provide substantially identical optical outputs for identical X radiation exposure impinging upon the scintillator body. Spectral linearity is important because x-rays impinging upon the scintillator body typically include a number of different frequencies, and because the scintillator response to the radiation should be substantially uniform for all such frequencies. Afterglow or persistence is the tendency of the scintillator to continue emitting optical radiation for a time after termination of the x-ray excitation. Long afterglow results in blurring, with time, of the information bearing signal.

Polycrystalline ceramic scintillators exhibiting many of the desirable properties mentioned above are further described in U.S. Patent No 4,421,671, also assigned to the present assignee. The scintillator described therein are comprised of yttria and gadolinia, and include at least one of a variety of rare earth activators for enhancing luminescent efficiency. The scintillator composition may also include one or more of several disclosed transparency promoters and light output restorers. Said aforementioned patent still further discloses that luminescent afterglow of the yttria-gadolinia ceramic scintillators described therein may be reduced by adding ytterbium oxide (Yb_2O_3), strontium oxide (SrO), or calcium oxide (CaO).

Radiographic equipment employing said prior art solid state scintillator materials for the conversion of high energy radiation to an optical image still experience efficiency loss after exposure to high dosages of radiation. For example, radiation damage resulting for bismuth germanate single crystal scintillators reports an 11% damage occurring after a thirty minute exposure to ultraviolet radiation from a mercury lamp. A similar result occurs for higher energy gamma radiation. Furthermore the variation in radiation damage from crystal to crystal of bismuth germanate is reported to be quite high, approximately a factor of 30. A similar efficiency loss is found when the above mentioned polycrystalline type ceramic scintillators are exposed to high energy radiation dosages. The radiation damage in said type scintillator materials is characterized by loss in light output and/or a darkening in colour with prolonged exposure to radiation, and this decreased light output is found to be variable in magnitude from batch-to-batch. For example, yttria-gadolinia ceramic scintillators activated with europium exhibit a reduction in light output of 4 to 33%, depending upon the batch, for 450 roentgens of 140 kVp x-rays. This amount and variation of x-ray damage is undesirable in a quantitative x-ray detector and must be minimized in order to avoid ghost images from prior scans.

It remains desirable, therefore, to provide a polycrystalline solid state scintillator material which is not subject to damage produced from exposure to high radiation dosages.

It is another important object of the present invention to modify already known efficient polycrystalline solid state scintillator materials so as to better resist changes in scintillator efficiency with increasing x-ray dosage.

It is still another important object of the present invention to provide a method for preparing such improved polycrystalline type solid state scintillator materials.

Still another important object of the present invention is to provide improved radiographic equipment and methods utilizing said presently modified polycrystalline type solid state scintillator materials.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, a particular anneal treatment given to rare earth doped gadolinia type ceramic scintillator body provides increased resistance to radiation damage and can be carried out in a simple as well as direct manner. Since the sintering operation to form this ceramic material is ordinarily achieved by heating a pressed compact of the high purity (99.99% or greater) metal oxide ingredients in a refractory metal (tungsten) furnace using a wet hydrogen gas atmosphere (dewpoint = 20°C) at temperatures in the range $1700 - 2000^\circ\text{C}$, said anneal can be achieved while the sintered material is otherwise cooling to ambient conditions. Such an annealing modification simply requires that the sintered material be cooled in the temperature range about $1500 - 1000^\circ\text{C}$ for several hours in a controlled oxygen containing atmosphere at partial oxygen pressures between about 10^{-2} up to about 10^{-4} atmosphere. Alternately, a suitable anneal can be achieved by reheating the already sintered ceramic to the aforementioned upper annealing

temperature and thereafter cooling said ceramic while maintaining the specified controlled oxygen containing atmosphere at a typical cooling rate of approximately 300° C per hour. A suitable atmosphere for either type annealing step can be provided with an inert gas, such as argon, which includes the aforementioned oxygen partial pressures although pure oxygen and air maintained at subatmospheric conditions which produce said oxygen partial pressures are also contemplated. For example, an air atmosphere maintained in the range from about 5×10^{-7} atmosphere up to about 1.5×10^{-1} atmosphere is expected to prove suitable for a proper anneal of the present type scintillator materials.

The general class of densely sintered rare earth doped gadolinia containing ceramic scintillator materials which can be improved in the foregoing manner is more fully disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 4,421,671 along with several suitable preparation methods achieving the desired cubic crystalline form in the final sintered material. To achieve said objective generally requires that a compact of the metal oxide precursor materials be hot pressed since cold pressing and sintering of said materials tends to form an undesirable monoclinic crystalline structure in the final material. Accordingly, the desired final produce can be achieved by methods of preparation disclosed in the referenced patent such as vacuum hot pressing and sintering combined with gas hot isostatic pressing. Scintillators described in said referenced patent are comprised of yttria and gadolinia, and at least one of a variety of rare earth activators for enhancing luminescent efficiency. The scintillator composition may optionally include one or more of several disclosed transparency promoters and light output restorers. The referenced patent further discloses that luminescent afterglow of the yttria-gadolinia ceramic scintillators described therein may be reduced by adding ytterbium oxide (Yb_2O_3), strontium oxide (SrO), or calcium oxide (CaO). A still more limited class of these yttria-gadolinia scintillators which can be particularly benefited according to the present invention is disclosed in the above mentioned copending EP application, EP 023538. The latter ceramics include between about 5 and 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.02 and 12 mole percent of either Eu_2O_3 or Nd_2O_3 as a rare earth activator oxide, and between about 0.003 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said scintillator composition being Y_2O_3 . Although it is further recognized in said copending application that the heating of the ceramic in an oxygen containing atmosphere for one - twenty hours at a temperature between about 800° - 1200° C improves its optical transparency, such does not recognize that the presently disclosed oxygen anneal can produce any added resistance to radiation damage. It has also now been discovered that only a still more limited class of said rare earth doped yttria-gadolinia scintillator achieves the full benefit when modified according to the present invention. Said more limited ceramic composition comprises from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.5 and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 , and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 . As previously recognized, however, said presently improved scintillator material may still further contain other metal ions selected from zirconium, hafnium, thorium, and tantalum to serve as transparency promoting densifying agents while also containing at least one light output restorer selected from CaO and SrO in an amount sufficient to effect a higher light output than said ceramic absent said restorer.

Various types of modern CT scanners to be more fully described hereinafter can be improved by employment of the presently improved ceramic scintillators. A typical radiographic imaging system of this type utilizes an x-ray source, a scintillator body to convert the x-rays to an optical image, and photodetection means coupled thereto for converting said optical image to an electronic display thereof. Said radiographic imaging system further generally includes means for digital recording of said optical image which can still further include digital processing means to enhance the quality of the finally displayed image in an already known manner.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCOMPANYING DRAWING

The drawing is a schematic representation partially in block diagram form for a typical CT scanner system for production, transmission, and detection of X radiation utilizing the presently modified scintillator materials.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to accompanying drawing, there is depicted partially in block diagram form a typical CT scanner for the production, transmission, and detection of X radiation. This scanner includes radiation source 10, for producing penetrating radiation. Radiation source 10 frequently comprises a rotating anode x-ray tube. The radiation produced by source 10 is colimated by colimator 11 to produce a thin beam of x-rays 12 which is projected through aperture 13 toward x-ray detector 14. A subject or body to be examined, such as subject 15, is positioned in the path of the fan beam of x-rays 12 in such a manner that the beam is attenuated as it passes through subject 15, with the amount of attenuation being dependent upon the density of subject 15. Radiation detector 14 comprises detector array housing 18 having a plurality of channels 19 defined therein. Channels 19 are configured so as to receive the attenuated fan beam of x-rays 12 and so to produce electrical signals which are dependent on the intensity of the radiation received within each channel. The resulting electrical signals are therefor measure of the attenuation of the x-ray beam by the portion of the body through which the beam has passed. In said x-ray radiation detector, channels 19 typically comprise a plurality of colimated cells with each cell being of the type already known as further described in the aforementioned co-pending patent application and which comprises the presently modified scintillator body.

In operation, electrical signal readings are taken from each channel 19 at a plurality of angular positions with respect to subject 15, while source 10 and detector 14 are rotated about said subject. The resulting readings are digitized and transmitted to computer means 16, which uses one of a number of available algorithms to compute and construct a picture of the cross section transversed by the fan beam of x-rays 12. The resulting picture is displayed on cathode ray tube 17, or, alternately, may be used to create an image on permanent media such as photographic film or the like.

To still further illustrate a typical treat-method providing increased resistance to radiation damage for the previously disclosed ceramic scintillator materials, there is reported in Table I below various radiation damage measurements conducted upon treated scintillator materials of this type. More particularly, samples of a $(Y_{.67}Gd_{.30}Eu_{.03}Pr_{.00015})_2O_3$ ceramic that had been prepared in the above described manner were thereafter annealed in a closed alumina tube inserted in a molybdenum disilicide resistance furnace at the various elevated temperatures reported in Table I while further being subjected to various controlled oxygen containing atmospheres also reported in said Table. Cooling rates maintained during said annealing treatments were approximately 300°C per hour with an annealing period of ten hours being maintained while the samples were held in a temperature range between 1000° and 1500°C. Additionally, various samples were annealed in air and pure oxygen as further reported in Table I at the specified oxygen partial pressures.

TABLE I

Oxygen Partial Pressure (Atm)	Anneal Temperature (°C)	X-ray Damage After Exposure to	
		450 R	2000 R
10^{-9} (as sintered)	1950	3.5 to 6%	6 to 10%
1×10^{-4}	1500	2.2 to 3%	5.0 to 6.5%
2.5×10^{-3}	1500	1.5	
1.3×10^{-2}	1500	1.8	
2×10^{-1}	1500		46%
1 (pure O_2)	1420		30%
$1.3 (10)^{-4}$	1420	2.4-3.2%	
$2.5 (10)^{-3}$	1400	1.8-2.1%	
$1.3 (10)^{-2}$	1400	1.6-1.6%	

Results in Table I clearly demonstrate that the radiation damage resistance of an as-sintered ceramic scintillator was markedly improved by annealing in higher partial pressures of oxygen up to values of about 10^{-2} atmospheres at a temperature of 1400°C . It can be pointed out in this regard that a value of radiation damage which is one-half of another treated sample signifies that the life of the former sample is about twice as long and thereby represents a considerable improvement. In addition, the spread in damage values was smaller for the annealed material. Said results also demonstrate, however, that exceedingly poor radiation resistance was found in samples annealed in higher oxygen pressures of 2×10^{-1} (air) and one atmosphere (pure oxygen).

Still further radiation damage measurements were conducted with the above defined ceramic scintillator material to determine the effect of annealing temperature alone on radiation damage and as reported in Table II below. Specifically, the oxygen partial pressures employed for said annealing treatments is reported in Table II along with the amounts of x-ray damage experienced after the further therein reported x-ray dosages.

TABLE II

Oxygen Partial Pressure (Atm)	Anneal Temperature (°C)	X-ray Damage After Exposure to	
		450 R	2000 R
1.3×10^{-2} to 1×10^{-4}	1500	1.5 to 3.0%	4 to 6%
" "	1400	1.5 to 3.0%	4%
" "	1300		6%

For improved radiation resistance the result of Table II demonstrate that temperatures for the post-sintering annealing treatment can range between about 1300 and 1500°C for a ten hour annealing period at oxygen partial pressures between 10^{-4} and 10^{-2} atmosphere. While annealing periods less than ten hours can be employed without suffering a significant loss of the present improvement, further indications exist

that benefit is optimal at anneal periods of at least three hours for the particular controlled oxidation conditions reported in the tests conducted.

It will be apparent from the foregoing description that a broadly useful method has been discovered to improve the radiation resistance of ceramic type scintillator materials so as to enable enhanced quality for the optical image being formed and record. It will be apparent from the foregoing description, however, that various modifications in the specific embodiments above described can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, it is contemplated that still other rare earth doped gadolinia containing ceramics than above specifically evaluated can be benefited in the same manner albeit possibly not to the same degree as the specifically reported embodiment. Additionally, still other physical configurations of the above specifically disclosed CT scanner equipment can employ the presently improved scintillator materials. It is intended to limit the present invention, therefore, only to the scope of the following claims.

15 Claims

1. A polycrystalline x-ray stimuable scintillator body comprising a sintered rare earth doped gadolinia and yttria ceramic having a cubic crystal structure which has received a controlled oxidation anneal to reduce radiation damage otherwise occurring when said scintillator body is exposed to X radiation during conversion of said X radiation to a display image, the composition of said ceramic comprising from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.05 and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 , and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 .
2. A scintillator body as in claim 1 wherein said oxidation anneal is conducted in a controlled oxygen containing atmosphere.
3. A scintillator body as in claim 2 wherein said controlled oxidation anneal is conducted at an oxygen partial pressure in the range from about 10^{-4} atmosphere to about 10^{-2} atmosphere.
4. A scintillator body as in claim 1 wherein said controlled anneal is conducted in air at subatmospheric conditions.
5. A scintillator body as in claim 1 wherein subatmospheric air pressure is maintained in the range from about 5×10^{-7} atmosphere up to about 1.5×10^{-1} atmosphere.
6. A scintillator body as in claim 1 wherein the rare earth activator oxide is Eu_2O_3 .
7. A scintillator body as in claim 1 wherein the ceramic contains other metal ions selected from zirconium, hafnium, thorium, and tantalum to serve as transparency promoting densifying agents.
8. A scintillator body as in claim 7 wherein the ceramic still further contains at least one light output restorer selected from CaO and SrO in an amount sufficient to effect a higher light output than said ceramic absent said restorers.
9. A method for preparing a polycrystalline x-ray stimuable scintillator body which is more resistant to radiation damage comprising the steps of:
 - (a) sintering a rare earth doped gadolinia containing metal oxide compact to form a dense ceramic body having a cubic crystal structure, and
 - (b) annealing said ceramic body in a controlled oxygen containing atmosphere.
10. A method as in claim 9 wherein said controlled anneal is conducted at an oxygen partial pressure in the approximate range from about 10^{-4} atmosphere up to about 10^{-2} atmosphere.
11. A method as in claim 9 wherein said controlled anneal is conducted in air at subatmospheric pressure.
12. A method as in claim 11 wherein said subatmospheric air pressure is maintained in the range from about 5×10^{-7} atmosphere up to about 1.5×10^{-1} atmosphere.
13. A method as in claim 9 wherein the sintering action is achieved by hot pressing.
14. A method as in claim 9 wherein the composition of said metal oxide compact comprises from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.05 and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 .
15. A method as in claim 14 wherein the rare earth activator oxide is europium oxide (Eu_2O_3).

16. A method as in claim 9 wherein said metal oxide compact still further contains other metal ions selected from zirconium, hafnium, thorium and tantalum to serve as transparency promoting densifying agents.

17. A method as in claim 16 wherein said metal oxide compact still further contains at least one light output restorer selected from CaO and SrO in an amount sufficient to effect a higher light output than said scintillator body absent said restorer.

18. In a radiographic imaging system utilizing an x-ray source, a scintillator body to convert the x-rays to an optical image, and photodetection means coupled thereto for converting said optical image to an electronic display thereof, the improvement wherein said scintillator body comprises a polycrystalline sintered rare earth doped gadolinia containing ceramic having a cubic crystal structure which has received a controlled oxidation anneal to reduce radiation damage otherwise occurring where said scintillator body is exposed to said x-rays, the composition of said ceramic comprising from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.5 and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 , and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 .

19. A radiographic imaging system as in claim 18 wherein the rare earth activator oxide is Eu_2O_3 .

20. A radiographic imaging system as in claim 18 wherein the ceramic further contains other metal ions selected from zirconium, thorium and tantalum to serve as transparency promoting densifying agents.

21. A radiographic imaging system as in claim 20 wherein the ceramic still further contains at least one light output restorer selected from CaO and SrO in an amount sufficient to effect a higher light output than said ceramic absent said restorers.

22. A radiographic imaging system as in claim 18 which further includes means for digital recording of said optical image.

23. A radiographic imaging system as in claim 22 which further includes digital processing means to enhance the quality of said optical image.

24. An improved method of producing a radiographic image which comprises:

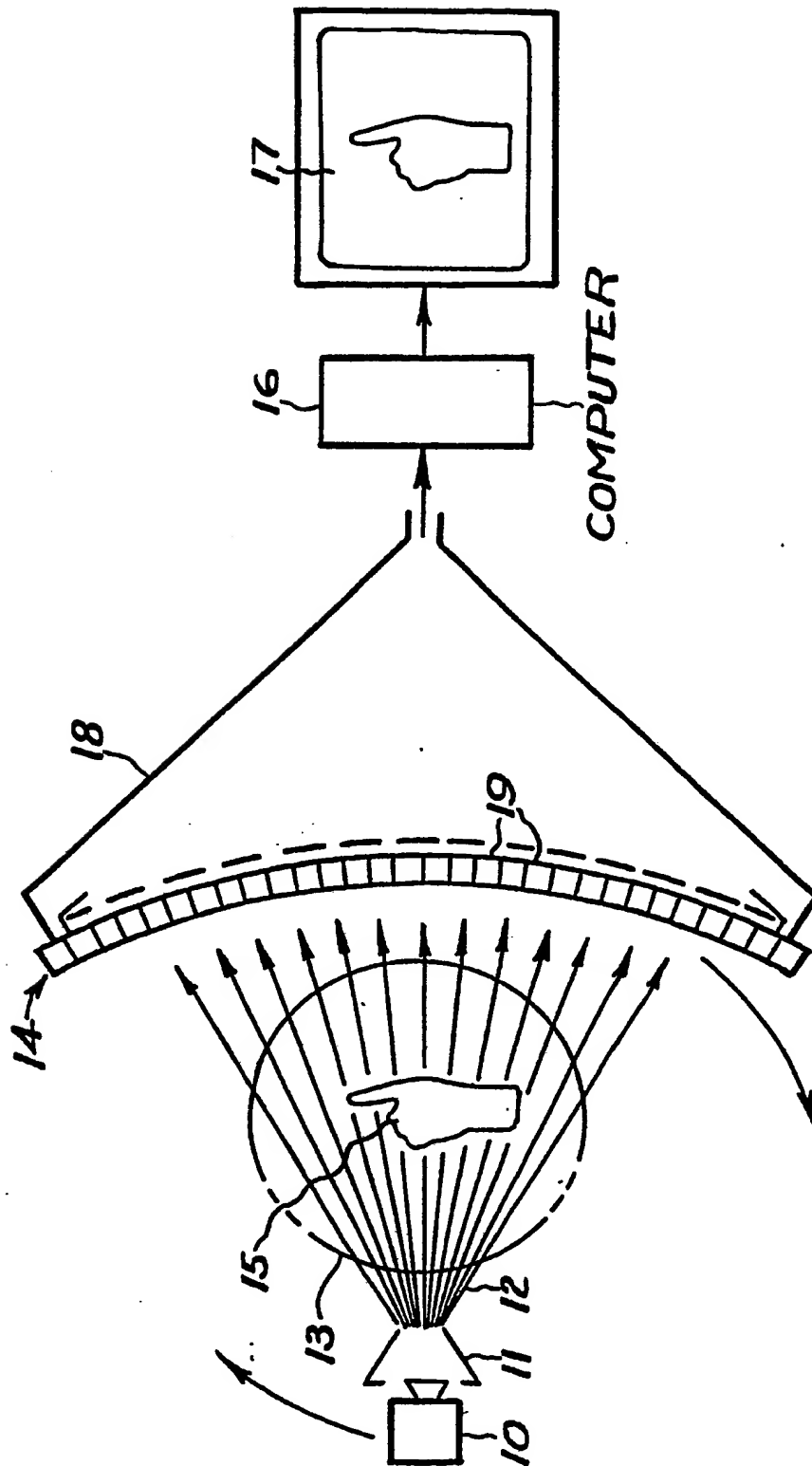
(a) exposing a scintillator body to a source of x-rays after passage through an object for conversion of the impinging radiation to an optical image,

(b) said scintillator body comprising a polycrystalline sintered rare earth doped gadolinia containing ceramic having a cubic crystal structure which has received a controlled oxidation anneal to reduce radiation damage otherwise occurring when said scintillator body is exposed to said x-rays, the composition of said ceramic comprising from about 5 mole percent up to about 50 mole percent of Gd_2O_3 , between about 0.5 and 12 mole percent of a rare earth activator oxide selected from the group consisting of Eu_2O_3 and Nd_2O_3 , and between about .0001 and 0.5 mole percent of at least one afterglow reducer selected from the group consisting of Pr_2O_3 and Tb_2O_3 , the remainder of said composition being Y_2O_3 , and

(c) converting said optical image to an electronic display thereof with photodetection means optically coupled to said scintillator body.

25. A method as in claim 24 which further includes digital recording of said optical image.

26. A method as in claim 25 which further includes digital processing to enhance the quality of said optical image.





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 88 10 8070

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. CL.4)
P,X	EP-A-0 235 387 (GENERAL ELECTRIC) * Abstract; column 3, lines 25-52; column 5, line 30 - column 6, line 9; column 12, line 24 - column 15, line 23; figures *	1-26	G 01 T 1/202
Y	EP-A-0 097 295 (GENERAL ELECTRIC) * Abstract; page 4, line 29 - page 6, line 9; page 16, line 31 - page 17, line 1; page 19, lines 18-26; claims; figures *	1-26	
Y	EP-A-0 097 296 (GENERAL ELECTRIC) * Abstract; page 9, line 34 - page 11, line 11; page 17, line 3 - page 19, line 25; claims *	1-26	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. CL.4)
			G 01 T C 04 B C 09 K
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 18-10-1988	Examiner DATTA S.
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